

Hollanders

**The Development of Their Objectives
in Europe and America**



By
Rev. Jacob Van der Meulen, D. D.

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ZEELAND, MICHIGAN**

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HOLLANDERS

The History of the Dutch
in the East Indies



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in Europe and America**



by
Rev. Jacob Van der Meulen, D. D.

Upon suggestion of the Particular Synod of
Chicago stressing the Work and Influence of
Rev. Cornelius Van der Meulen.

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PIONEER OBJECTIVES

Part I.—Freedom of Worship.

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Introduction

The ancestry of the Reformed Church in America is Dutch, and it is an ancestry of which we may well be proud. We read in "A Young People's History of the Christian Church," by Dr. F. S. Schenk: "In our own land (America) we owe largely to Holland these five foundation principles of our self-government: (1) Public Education. (2) The People the Source of Authority. (3) Representative Legislative Bodies. (4) The Union of Sovereign States. (5) A Written Constitution." Douglas Campbell says, "It is a curious fact that we have scarcely a legal or political institution of importance which is of English origin." Taine says, "In culture and instruction, as well as in the arts of organization and government, the Dutch were two centuries ahead of the rest of Europe." Moffat says, "The Hollanders are the most energetic and quick-witted people in the world."

There were three stages in the transplanting of the Dutch people and the Reformed Church from The Netherlands to the United States. Each of these stages was characterized by the will to achieve Freedom of Worship and Christian Education.

Stage I. The Colonization of New Amsterdam in 1624-28. We have neither space nor inclination to review the history of this prosperous Dutch settlement which, upon its seizure by the English in 1664, became known as New York. There is no need of that since Dr. Willard Dayton Brown, former Secretary of the Board of Education R. C. A., has done that so

remarkably well in his "History of the Reformed Church in America." We desire only to emphasize the fact that while the settlement of New Amsterdam and New Netherlands was an eminently successful venture of the Dutch West Indies Co., provision was made at the outset for Freedom of Worship and Christian Education. The company bound itself to provide both ministers and schoolmasters. Churches were established that have had a continuous existence until today.

The first church of New Amsterdam, "was organized, probably on April 10, 1628. This church continues to this day, the Collegiate Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New York, the mother of the Reformed Church in America." Being the offspring of the Reformed Church in The Netherlands, the original name of our Reformed Church in America was the "Reformed Dutch in America." The word "Dutch" continued in the official designation a long time, perhaps, humanly speaking, too long.

With the church, day schools were maintained. "The records of the Collegiate School of New York City, associated with the Collegiate Church, dates from 1637. This school has had a continuous existence since that time." Very early too, thought was given to the higher education of their youth, and especially to the training of ministers of the Gospel. The first ministers had been imported from The Netherlands. A little later, young men were sent to the Netherlands to be educated, and ordained by the Classis of Amsterdam with which the churches

remained affiliated. Rev. Theodore Frelinghuy-
sen, pastor of the Reformed Church in Albany,
was a chief promoter of agitation for separation
from the Church in The Netherlands and the
establishment of a College and Seminary in
America. His labors were intensified when his
two brothers died on shipboard while returning
from Holland where they had pursued their stud-
ies in preparation for ministry in the Reformed
Church in America. In 1766, Governor William
Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin, in the
name of King George granted a charter for the
erection of Queens College, at New Brunswick,
New Jersey. The name was changed later to
Rutgers College, in honor of Col. Henry Rut-
gers and some years ago this college ceased to
be a denominational school and became a State
University.

Always the training of ministers was upper-
most in the minds of the Dutch pioneers. And
their fond dreams were realized when in 1784,
the Theological Seminary of the Reformed
Church in America was established at New
Brunswick, New Jersey, the first theological
seminary in America.

The above facts, gleaned from Dr. Brown's
"History of the Reformed Church in America,"
will satisfy our present purpose.

Stage II. The Migration from the East to
the Middle West. Since the history of the found-
ing of the first Reformed Church west of the
Allegheny Mountains, namely, at Fairview, Ill.,
has never been published, the writer of this
article feels obliged to devote some time to this

subject. He does this confidently too, because it was his privilege while serving as pastor of the church at Fairview to become acquainted with some of the details of the founding of this "Mother Church of the West, and to read later the manuscript history written by Isaiah Wilson, son of the founding minister of the Fairview Church.

In the year 1836, a few families moved from Summerville and Six Mile Run, in the vicinity of New Brunswick, New Jersey, and settled in Western Illinois, approximately thirty miles south of Galesburg. When their number was increased in 1837, they plotted the village which they named Fairview. With only three log cabins, one small frame building, and a school house, constituting the village, the need of a church was felt and a meeting was called for August 19, 1837. At this meeting resolutions were adopted:

"First, Resolved that we consider the Church of Christ one of the greatest blessings bestowed on man.

"Second, Resolved, that since the greater part of us emigrated from the revered Classis of New Brunswick, N. J., we send a memorial to that revered body and solicit them to send a regular ordained minister as soon as convenient to organize a church in this place, to be called the First Dutch Reformed Church of Fairview, Ill."

As a result of this action, the Classis of New Brunswick, N. J., on Oct. 3, 1837, sent the Rev. A. D. Wilson, pastor of the Reformed Church at North Branch, N. J., with instruction to organ-

ize a church if he deemed it expedient. The church was organized although only eight souls, three men and five women, were ready to come into the church and assist in the organization. Rev. A. D. Wilson, having accomplished his mission, returned to his pastorate in New Jersey. A Sabbath School was organized at Fairview and regular meetings for prayer and praise were held in the log school house, or some cabin home.

The Christian Intelligence of April 21, 1838, has this report of action by the Classis of New Brunswick, N. J. "The call for a pastor, as it came from the little church of eight souls (at Fairview, Ill.) was presented to the Classis. When the question was asked, "Who will go?" a supreme silence reigned. Ministers without location and looking for charges, did not respond. Then with trembling frame and faltering voice, Rev. A. D. Wilson arose and said: "Our child born on the prairie of Illinois must and shall not be left alone to die. If no one else can be found, I will go and nurture it as best I can, God helping me." The Rev. A. D. Wilson arrived at Fairview on the last day of July, 1838, beginning a pastorate that was to last nineteen years.

On Nov. 26, 1838, the cornerstone was laid and the frame of the noble structure that has served as church ever since, was raised. The writer desires to emphasize here that with a membership of five women and three men, a church building with a seating capacity of six hundred was erected. The building, patterned after those

MOTHER CHURCH OF THE WEST



FAIRVIEW REFORMED CHURCH
FAIRVIEW, ILLINOIS



FAIRVIEW REFORMED PARSONAGE

so familiar in New Jersey, is entirely of black walnut, the exterior covered with shingles of walnut painted white.

Fairview Church is an exact copy of that at Six Mile Run, N. J. 45 x 65 feet, and cost more than \$9,000. When the church was dedicated, there were twenty-two members.

It took three years to complete the building for when funds were exhausted, the work stopped temporarily. Carpenters were to be paid \$1.25 a day, and though these were none of them confessing Christians, they were of noble spirit and waited long before they could be paid in full. \$449.00 was the total contribution from outside, the little Fairview group raising the rest. The pastor and his family sacrificed with their loyal people, supplementing the salary of \$150.00 to \$200.00 a year, with their labors on the farm which the pastor had purchased.

In answer to the question: "Why build a church capable of seating 600 people when the number of worshippers now, can total no more than 100?" the builders replied reverently and joyously: "We are building for God and posterity." Noble and challenging faith! Was it not?

Following the organization of the church at Fairview, other churches of the Reformed denomination came into being. Soon the list embraced Brunswick, Pekin, Van der Veer, Havana, Raritan, Pennsylvania Lane, Spring Lake, Manito and Norris. The movement spread into Michigan and churches were organized viz.: First, Grand Rapids, Centerville, Constantine,

De Spelder, Britton, Macon, Ridgeway, Mottville, Jefferson, South Bend, Battle Creek and Sandusky City. Classis of Michigan was organized in 1841 and dissolved September 11, 1923.

Classis of Illinois was organized November 13, 1841. When churches increased to 75, the Classis of Iowa was organized out of it, in 1884.

Of the first churches organized in Illinois, three, namely, Fairview, Pekin, Raritan, have survived; of those in Michigan only First Reformed Church of Grand Rapids has continued its existence, though now in combination with Second Reformed Church, the two constituting Central Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. We trust that these eighteen churches, defunct so far as the Reformed Church of America is concerned, were not lost to the Kingdom of Christ but that their members were received into the fellowship of other evangelical denominations.

The Classis of Michigan which enrolled all English-speaking Reformed Churches in Michigan, viz.: Hope, Holland, Second Kalamazoo, Second Grand Haven, was dissolved on September 11, 1923, and its members included in the Classis of Holland, or Classis of Grand River; the latter organized in 1869, enrolled all the Dutch-speaking churches in Michigan that were not members of the Classis of Holland. A quite recent geographical distribution of churches, both English and Dutch, ended the existence of the Classis of Grand River, and resulted in the organization of the Classes of Muskegon, Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, on September 11, 1923.

True to Reformed Church tradition, when provision had been made for Worship, men began to plan for Christian Education of their children and especially preparation for ministers. In 1858, the Particular Synod of Chicago, together with the Classis of Illinois, were seriously considering the establishment of an educational institution, especially for the qualifying of men for the Gospel ministry to meet the demand for ministers in the Reformed Church in the West. A committee was appointed by the Classis of Illinois to secure a charter from the legislature of the state for such an institution of learning to be located within the bounds of this Classis.

Fairview, being the mother church in the West, and having the largest membership of any church in the Classis, argued that, by priority right, the contemplated school should be located there. A meeting was held on March 5, 1859 and the following resolution was adopted:

“Whereas the fundamental principle of our government is that the power belongs to the people, and upon the proper disposition of that power depends the welfare of our civil and religious liberty and

“Whereas we believe that our youth should be properly educated to be prepared for the various stations in life, which in the providence of God they may be called upon to fill, and

“Whereas we, as a denomination, believe in a well-educated ministry, and that the time has now arrived for us to make an expression of our convictions on this subject in some way that will evidence, to our sister churches in the western

country, and to our judicatories, both East and West, that we are most willing and ready to render any available pecuniary means in our power for the erection and establishing of an institution, under the direction of our denomination for the education of our youth in this great valley of the Mississippi;

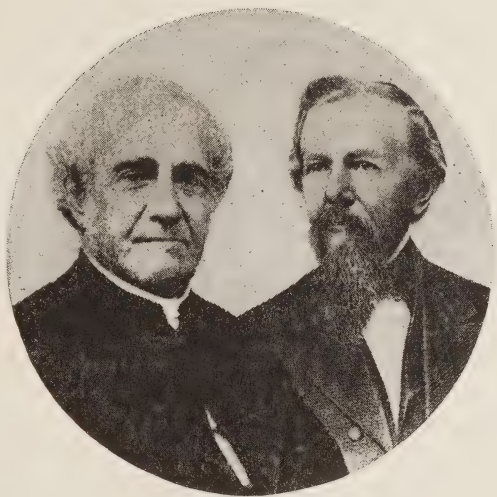
Therefore, be it Resolved that we, the congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church of Fairview, Illinois, would recommend to our consistory to pledge to the Classis of Illinois, at its next session, the house and grounds belonging to said congregation, known as parsonage house and lots, for the purpose of a grammar school, seminary, college, or university, under the care of the Dutch Reformed Church denomination, provided the said institution is located at Fairview, Illinois.

The Consistory adopted a similar Resolution with the consent of the entire congregation and thus the spacious, newly erected parsonage with its large grounds was to have been offered to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, as a free and unencumbered gift, for the purpose of a denominational school.

The then pastor of the church, Rev. Wm. Anderson, went to the meeting of General Synod with the offer in his possession, and returned with the astounding report: "I told General Synod that I had accepted a call to a church in New Jersey and they had better give their full support to the college at Holland, Mich.

The beautiful and commodious parsonage and grounds have continued to be the home of

**LEADERS OF THE
MICHIGAN EMIGRATION**



LEFT, CORNELIUS VAN DER MEULEN

RIGHT, A. C. VAN RAALTE



the succeeding pastors of the Fairview Church and bear witness still to the devoted and generous spirit of the people in our Mother Church of the West.

Stage III.—The Emigration from The Netherlands to Michigan in 1846-7 The Preparation of Leaders

There is a saying: "Every crisis has its hero." We agree with that sentiment if it means that when a crisis comes God has his hero in readiness for it.

The leaders of the Michigan emigration were divinely prepared. In 1832, cholera was the scourge that was sweeping over Europe, leaving thousands of dead in its wake. Albertus C. Van Raalte, a hitherto care-free student in the University of Leiden, was so impressed by what appeared to him a visitation of the wrath of God upon the sin of the world, that he surrendered his life to God and henceforth had no other ambition than that of being a minister of the Gospel.

Cornelius Van der Meulen, then a prosperous contractor for government buildings, had a heart-breaking experience. Cholera entered his home and in one day bereaved him and his wife of their two children, a boy of four and one of two years. Before that experience, Van der Meulen was a deist, believing that religion was quite essential to men generally, but not feeling any particular personal need of it. His wife, though a woman possessing many fine qualities, was not a Christian. In their bereavement, both

parents prostrated themselves beside the lifeless bodies of their dearly beloved children, in an agonizing prayer. They prayed God to forgive them for a love for their children which had left no room for the love of God. And they made a vow that if other children were born to them, these would be consecrated to the Lord. So well was that vow kept, and its example blessed of God, that the number of sons and daughters and their children who have rendered full-time service of the Lord, has totaled twelve.

Cholera, the scourge of Europe, took a toll of thousands of dead; but cholera, the instrument of God in the conversion of Van Raalte and Van der Meulen, has brought unnumbered thousands into the kingdom of God, in The Netherlands and America. Truly, "behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face!"

Economic Depression an Incentive to Emigration

The reign of Napoleon, followed by the war with Belgium, led The Netherlands into an economic depression that caused privation and hunger, especially among the poor in the cities. And added to all this was the "potato rot" of 1845 which robbed the poor of both city and country, of the chief article of food. With a population of two million, more than 700,000 were dependent upon public or private charity. The cost of feeding the poor required an annual budget of twenty million dollars during this period of depression. It was during this time that the Provincial Synod of Zeeland requested the Rev.

Cornelius Van der Meulen to issue a call to the churches in The Netherlands to observe a "united thanksgiving, prayer and fasting day" on February 25, 1846. Copies of this pamphlet, perhaps the only thing Van der Meulen ever published, still exists.

In the meantime, people from other European countries began to emigrate to America as a possible escape from the sufferings of the "home land." Thousands had already emigrated from Germany. In 1840, some 57 had gone from The Netherlands. Letters from those who had gone to America, began to arrive, causing unrest among those who remained. It is recorded that one day in 1845, a certain school teacher, A. Hartgerink, from a village in Gelderland, visited Rev. A. Brummelkamp and showed him letters from America written by friends who had been classed among the "very poor" in The Netherlands and who wrote of the luxurious life they were now living in America. Brummelkamp and his brother-in-law, Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte, were deeply impressed by the contents of these letters and were led in 1846, to issue a brochure entitled, "Why We Advocate Emigration to North America," etc. Inspired by this pamphlet, many began to look to America for relief from the present evil days.

Cornelius Van der Meulen in his "Call to Thanksgiving, and Prayer" in 1846, had warned against emigration. He feared that the Hollanders might leave their beloved fatherland where God had meant so much to them, and go to an unknown land only to improve their material

interests. He was afraid they would lose their identity as a religious people and be swallowed up in a land of strange language and strange customs.

But Van der Meulen had since changed his attitude.

The occasion for this change was his witnessing, in the Spring of 1847, a hilarious celebration of a secularized Easter. He saw crowds making merry in the streets, celebrating a holiday, while comparatively few persons gathered in the church to commemorate a holy day. Sadness filled his heart and he was oppressed with a fear that religion was declining in The Netherlands, worldliness increasing both outside and inside the church. He wondered whether the wrath of God would be visited soon upon the fatherland; whether the sun which had risen gloriously in the East would now move majestically westward and reach its zenith in the New World. Might not even a small company of devout Christians become the salt of the earth in some new settlement in America, even as the Pilgrim Fathers had already proven to be such in New England? Van der Meulen decided to cross the Atlantic, taking with him as many people of like mind as he could. Thus he addressed a large gathering of Zeelanders and with that persuasiveness which characterized all his preaching, which one of the speakers at his funeral later, described as a natural oratory by which he swayed his audiences, moving them to laughter or tears, at will, he aroused a great enthusiasm for emigration to America.

Real Reason for Emigration

There was no freedom of worship in The Netherlands just prior to the emigration of 1847. The name "Reformed Church of The Netherlands" was a reminder of the Reformation by which Luther and Calvin and Knox and others under the leadership of the Spirit of God, broke the shackles of the Roman Catholic Church and left men free to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience. Eighty years the Netherlands fought with Spain to maintain that freedom and they emerged from that struggle victorious. But, like nearly all of Europe, The Netherlands came under the domination of France in the latter part of the eighteenth century when Napoleon sought to make himself master of the world. Holland had lost her independence, both politically and religiously. We are concerned here with the reorganization of the church and especially with Article 291 of the Napoleonic code, which reads: "No association of more than twenty persons whose object is to meet daily, or on special days appointed for the observance of religious, political or other purposes, shall organize themselves without the consent of the government." And Article 294 says, "Any person who without the consent of the municipal authority shall grant or consent to the use of his house . . . for the meeting of members of an association . . . for the celebration of a cult, shall be punished by a fine of from sixteen to two hundred francs" (one franc would be the equivalent of 19½ cents in American money). The religious persecutions that resulted from the re-

vival of the above Articles and their enforcement in 1847, were the real cause of the emigration from The Netherlands to Michigan nearly one hundred years ago.

After the fall of Napoleon and his banishment to the Island of Elba, the Congress of Vienna in 1815, re-established Holland as an independent nation and set the Prince of Orange upon its throne to rule over it as king, with the title William I.

Reorganization of the Reformed Church

If the people of Holland expected once more to enjoy political and religious freedom, they were bitterly disappointed very soon. William I proved to be no worthy descendant of the beloved House of Orange. He had an unholy ambition to make the Church subject to the State and to conform both to his will. The time seemed ripe for his purpose. What would be termed "modernism" today, was sweeping over the Church. The fundamental teachings of Christianity, so dear to the fathers and for which they had suffered and died, were regarded with indifference generally and even ridiculed by many. And William I expected little opposition from the clergy for he had provided for the payment of their salaries now long in arrears. Thus, confidently, he made the bold move of re-organizing the Church in 1816. The time-honored name "Gereformeerde Kerk" (Reformed Church) was supplanted by "Hervormde Kerk" (Re-organized Church). The new organization would still consist of the General Synod, the Pro-

visional Government, the Classis and the Consistory, but the right to select the members of these bodies, would, in the final analysis, belong to the King.

The democratic government under which the people elected their representatives in the Synod ceased to exist and in its stead there was ushered in an aristocratic, purely political, government under which the members of the Synod were largely appointed by the King and were subject to the minister of public worship, who was not even obliged to be a member of the church. The regulation that was most objectionable was the requirement regarding the ordination of ministers. Whereas under the old order a candidate was obliged to profess "belief in the thirty-seven articles of the Confession of Faith in accordance with God's Word," under the new order he was to profess his "acceptance of the Confession of Faith in so far as that was in accordance with God's Word." As a result, many pulpits were now occupied by men who made no profession of orthodoxy. It has been estimated that out of fifteen hundred ministers, scarcely one-tenth would have met the requirements of the original Reformed Church. Such was the Hervormde or Re-organized Church.

Introduction of Hymns

Another matter that was destined to arouse opposition was the innovation of Gospel Hymns (Evangelische Gezangen) in the "Hervormde" Church. In the early days of the change, when the pastor announced one of these Hymns, the men among the opposing party would put on

their hats, indicating that they were taking no part in that period of the service, or they would walk out of the church and not return until the singing of the obnoxious hymn was ended. Happily, many of those opposing the singing of hymns changed their attitude, and even upon their dying beds, found their greatest comfort in the words of those hymns, spiritual songs in which they found the expression of their hope of salvation, in the redemptive work of Christ, their crucified, risen, and ascended Lord.

Persecution of Seceders

Opposition to the "Hervormde" Church grew rapidly. The first actual break came when under the leadership of Rev. Hendrik Pieter Scholte, the consistory of the church at Ulrum, in the northern part of The Netherlands, signed an "Act of Secession," dated Nov. 1, 1834. In this document they stated that the "Hervormde Kerk" was not the true, but a false church, and that they were seceding from it in order to return to the Reformed (Gereformeerde Kerk) Church of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From this time on, a growing number of ministers and people joined the "Seceders." Rev. H. P. Scholte became the leader of the group that emigrated later to Pella, Iowa. Associated with him in 1836 was Albertus C. Van Raalte, the future founder of the Dutch colony in Holland, Michigan.

In March, 1836, the leaders of the seceding group held their first national meeting. The seceders were variously known at first, "seced-

ing (afgescheidene kerk)," "Christian Reformed (Christelijke Gereformeerde)," "Church of Christ," "Church under the Cross," etc.

In the meantime the civil authorities and the state-sponsored Hervormde Church, began a fierce persecution of the seceders, hoping to stamp out the opposition. With no churches in which to gather, the seceders met in private homes, barns or the open air. And they were not left free to do this. The Articles of the Napoleonic Code, referred to above, were made to apply in their case. Fines were imposed upon every gathering that numbered more than twenty people. Permit me to give an illustration or two from the life of Rev. Cornelius Van der Meulen. Word had been sent out that Ds. Van der Meulen was to preach on a certain evening at the farm house of an elder, G. Weijns, near Axel. Hungry for the bread of life, the people came from every direction, crowding the place to capacity. About eleven o'clock the owner of the house answered a knock on the door. To his question, "Who is there?" answer was made: "Two officers, and his secretary sent by the mayor (burgemeester), to find out what is going on here." The farmer made quick answer, "Well, some of my friends are here, but I shall call on the mayor in the morning and explain everything." The officers departed and, returning to the mayor, were soundly lectured for not having entered the house and counted the people present. Trying hard as they did, they were never able to find proof that there had been more than nineteen people present on that occasion. How-

ever, a fine of twenty-six gulden, approximately \$10.50 was imposed and paid.

On another occasion, the large barn of elder Jochem Van der Wege, was filled to the rafters. Ds. Van der Meulen stood on the farm wagon which served as pulpit. The service was just begun when two armed officers of the law approached the minister and said: "In the name of the king of The Netherlands we forbid your preaching to these people and command you to leave this place." Whereupon the preacher made answer: "You have done your duty in the name of the king of The Netherlands but now in the name of the King of kings, I tell you that I am under orders to preach the Gospel to these people." Three times that day he preached, and at the close of each service, deacons stood at the door to receive the offerings. The fines aggregated two hundred and sixty gulden and the collections amounted to approximately the same, one hundred and four dollars, one gulden being equivalent to about forty cents.

Great crowds gathered on every occasion, as many as one thousand in the barn and around it, of Jannes Van de Luyster, of Borssele, in the province of Zeeland, on one occasion. Not only were Christians edified by the heart-searching preaching of Ds. Van der Meulen, but many sinners were converted. It is related that there were no less than one hundred conversions at one service. People were seen on their knees, under trees and behind bushes, along the homeward way. More than two thousand persons made confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as

their personal Savior under Van der Meulen's ministry. Among these were several young men who later became ministers of the Gospel. It was one of these last, Rev. Adrian Zwemer, father of the well-known missionary family, who, speaking at the funeral of Cornelius Van der Meulen many years later, gave him the title, "The Apostle of Zeeland."

But persecution grew steadily worse. Van der Meulen never suffered from violence against his person, and fines imposed upon him were quickly paid by his loving followers. Other preachers among the seceders did not fare so well: Van Raalte was thrown into prison and languished there for some time, as did others. In other cases, fines accumulated to an extent that was beyond all ability to pay.

The following incident will illustrate the extent of the enmity against the "seceders from the state church." A little boy, of one of the seceder families had fallen into a canal. Passers-by of the hostile element saw the child struggling in the water but instead of rescuing him, cried "Let the cursed seceder drown." Fortunately there was another "cursed seceder" near who saved the lad. Emigration was now inevitable.

Departure. Establishing homes and Churches

Sick, nigh unto death, Rev. A. C. Van Raalte made a pledge to the Lord that if he recovered, he would lead God's people who wanted to escape the persecution and other evils of the fatherland by emigrating to America and establishing a Holland colony. Thus, with fifty-three follow-

ers, Van Raalte sailed on the ship "The Southerner" according to the Western tradition or "The Sultana" according to the Christian Intelligencer of December 3, 1846 and arrived in New York harbor Nov. 17, 1846. Forsaking earlier thoughts of settling in Wisconsin or Illinois, Van Raalte decided to go to Michigan. From Detroit the emigrants made their way to Allegan, and on to Black Lake, where they laid the foundations of the city of Holland, in February, 1847. The number of settlers was augmented soon by later arrivals.

Spurred on by the example of Van Raalte and his followers, other groups left The Netherlands. The largest of these was that of Zeelanders.

Many of these were well-to-do who were soon ready to go. Among these was Jannes Van de Luyster, a noble-minded, generous-hearted friend of Cornelius Van der Meulen, whose large barn had frequently served as a meeting place for the seceders from the state church, and who purposed that "worthy poor" should also be assisted in escaping persecution in the home-land and finding freedom of worship in America. He sold his extensive farm lands for \$24,000 and offered to pay all the expenses of those who needed such aid. Seventy-seven persons accepted this gracious offer. Thus the largest group of emigrants, numbering four hundred and fifty-two souls, was about ready to set sail for America. But not quite: they wanted to go as an organized church. Thus they met formally and chose their consistory, consisting of Jannes

Van der Luyster and Johannes Hoogesteger as elders and Jan Steketee and Adrian Glerum as deacons. Then they extended a call to Rev. Cornelius Van der Meulen to be their pastor. The call was speedily accepted and all preparations for departure were hastened.

This Jan Steketee and two sons, some years later, lost their lives while plying their trade, in a storm on Lake Michigan. Descendants of Skipper Jan Steketee have been and are, prominently associated with the business, political and religious life of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Zeelanders began their voyage on April 8, 1847. Three ships were required to transport the voyagers. Jan Steketee was in charge of one, Jannes Van de Luyster of a second, and Rev. C. Van der Meulen and J. Kabboord of the third. Van de Luyster's ship was first to arrive at New York, and Van der Meulen's the last, namely, on July 2, 1847. The voyage was a long trial, due to crowded quarters, unsanitary conditions, and monotonous food, resulting in discomfort and sickness. The journey inland was little better, for upon arrival at New York, the emigrants fell victim to greedy speculators and gangsters who easily misled and cheated the emigrants who understood neither the language nor customs of the new land. A more detailed account of the Van der Meulen group follows.

Vander Meulen and his company left Goes for Rotterdam April 8, 1847. There they boarded the ship Princess Sophia on April 13. Arrived at Hellevoethuis, the ship was held in the harbor, not being allowed to go farther because the emi-

grants numbered more than 150 and there was almost as many other voyagers on board. Arrangements had to be made for another ship to take these others to their destination. A delay of nearly six weeks was necessary. During this time the Zeelanders had to be fed and they could not make use of the provisions intended for the ocean voyage. Van der Meulen hurried to Rotterdam for consultation with friends. It was suggested that he preach in that and other cities and have offerings taken for the stranded Zeelanders. The plan worked out successfully. The voyage was resumed and leaving Hellevoethuis May 27, the company arrived in New York on July 2, 1847, the voyage taking thirty-six days.

Before reaching New York, an epidemic of measles on shipboard took the lives of some twenty children and one young woman.

Van de Luyster's ship had been the first to arrive in New York, that is, on June 6, 1847, thus, according to agreement, he was to make choice of destination. He chose Michigan, where Van Raalte had already founded Holland. Jan Steketee's ship arrived soon after. Leaving word with Rev. Thomas DeWitt, D.D., a minister of the Reformed Church in America and who had interested himself in the Holland emigration, viz.: that they had gone on to Michigan, the Van de Luyster and Steketee groups left New York, to be followed by Ds. Van der Meulen and his company.

The trip inland was by canal boat, by way of Troy and Albany, to Buffalo. From Buffalo, by steam boat, the Zeelanders went to Grand

Haven. From there the emigrants went by flat-bottomed boat or scow, drawn by a horse that walked along the beach, by way of Port Sheldon and on to Black Lake.

Arriving at Black Lake, the poor Hollanders saw nothing but sandy bluffs and giant trees, a landscape wholly unfamiliar to them. And the "City of Holland" was only a conglomerate of lodges made of branches, with here and there huts made of rough-hewn logs. With no place available for the new-comers, these must shift for themselves as best they could. Van de Luyster being first to arrive, that is, June 27, 1847, must make choice of location for the Zeelanders. He bought 1,680 acres of land from the government, approximately six miles east of Holland; here was to be built a village which should bear the name "Zeeland." But when Van der Meulen and his group joined Van de Luyster's company, August 1, 1847, nothing had been accomplished. The first-comers sat listless and despairing, bewailing their lot, with little hope for the future.

It was the task of Cornelius Van der Meulen to inspire hope and cheer into the hearts of his followers. With his knowledge of surveying, which he had acquired in his youth, he laid out the lots, and with his early experience as a contractor for public buildings, he directed the erection of homes and other buildings. One of the reasons for selecting Michigan for settlement by the Hollanders was that there was an abundance of building material at hand. It was to be had for the taking. But that material was still in the

form of giant trees, "Sons of Anak" the emigrants called them. Axes, hatchets, and other tools had to be purchased in Grand Haven or Allegan. And the settlers had no experience in felling trees. They began the task by chopping all around the trunk, never knowing how the tree would fall, a dangerous procedure that resulted in the death of many a wood-chopper. Friendly Indians came to the rescue and taught these new-comers to notch the trees on opposite sides in a manner that determined the exact direction of the tree's fall. And it must have been the inventive genius of earlier arrived Yankees who taught the Hollanders how to save half their labor. A tree was cut about half way through its trunk, then nine other trees in direct line with the first were cut in similar manner. The first tree was then cut clear through and in its fall, it carried the others with it.

The sawing and moving of the logs was a prodigious task, all having to be done by hand, there being no machinery, not even horses or oxen to do the hauling. The first buildings were of logs roughly squared. The roof was a problem; the earliest was perhaps made of saplings or small trees, overlaid with strips of bark, and fairly waterproof. A large room served for kitchen and living room. The loft overhead provided sleeping space and was reached by a ladder through a hole in the ceiling. This story is told of the two sons of Cornelius Van der Meulen: the younger, John, one night fell through the opening in the floor of the loft to the floor below. Jacob, his brother, cried in alarm:

"John, are you dead? Speak." John made answer: "I'm not dead, but I'm speechless." Both Jacob and John lived long enough to become preachers and quite eloquent too.

In August of 1847, the village of Zeeland consisted of no less than one hundred and twenty homes, and the First Reformed Church enrolled three hundred and twenty-five communicant members.

Other Settlements

A group of Friesians also arrived in 1847. They left The Netherlands on April 7, with Rev. M. A. Ypma as their pastor, and arrived in Holland June 30, 1847. From Graafschap came a company who arrived in Holland in June of 1847 and, upon advice of Rev. A. C. Van Raalte, settled in Laketown Township. They soon after called the Rev. H. G. Klijn to be their pastor. The call was accepted in 1851 and thus the Graafschap Reformed Church was fully established. The church building was moved to Central Park in 1917 and the congregation continues to worship there, under the name Central Park Reformed Church since 1922.

In 1848, a group came from the province of Overisel with Rev. S. Bolks as their pastor.

Each of these groups named their settlement after the province in The Netherlands from which they had come.

The Classis of Holland was organized April 23, 1848.

V—Union with the Reformed Church of America

Not wishing to be as orphans religiously in this new land, the Hollanders sought affiliation with the Reformed Church in America. It was natural that they should do this. Two ministers of that denomination, Dr. N. Wyckhoff of Albany and Dr. Thomas De Witt of New York, had been very friendly to these strangers and, in June, 1849, Dr. Wyckhoff came to Holland as a representative of the General Synod of the Reformed Church of America, to discuss affiliation. The R. C. A. was the offspring of the Reformed Church in The Netherlands (*de Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland*." The leaders, Van Raalte, Van der Meulen, Ypma, Jan Stekette, Van de Luyster and some twenty others were satisfied that the R. C. A. and the Christian Reformed Church in The Netherlands had the same liturgy and the same doctrinal standards. A "document" drawn up by Van Raalte and signed by all the representatives of the Michigan settlements was sent to the General Synod of the Reformed Church of America July 10, 1849. At the meeting of the General Synod in June, 1850, the General Synod enrolled the Classis of Holland and put it under the care of the Particular Synod of Albany, New York.

Secession of 1857 and 1882

That the affiliation with the R. C. A. did not meet with unanimous approval became manifest soon. Dissension arose and secession followed in 1857 and 1882. Causes that were emphasized

were: 1st—The presence of members of the Masonic order in the membership of the R. C. A.; 2nd—the use of “hymns” in the worship service of the R. C. A. With regard to the first protest: The seceders from the R. C. A. demanded action by the General Synod prohibiting members of the secret orders being included in the membership of the church. The ruling of the General Synod is that this matter is left to the judgment and action of the individual church.

The second protest demanded that only Psalms of the Old Testament should be sung in public worship. The General Synod ruling gives spiritual songs and gospel hymns which give praise to God for the redemptive work, the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the expression of the faith of saints of God in all ages, a proper place in the worship of God together with the Psalms of the Old Testament in which the redemptive work of Christ is foretold.

The seceders of 1857 and 1882, like the seceders of 1836, took the name of “Christian Reformed Church,” but one needs to distinguish between the “Christian Reformed Church in The Netherlands” and the “Christian Reformed Church in America.”

This last group has a fairly large membership and has its own College and Seminary, Calvin, located at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

III—Promoting Christian Education

At a meeting of the Classis of Holland on April 10, 1851, held at the parsonage of Rev. C. Van der Meulen, in Zeeland, "the question regarding the higher education of the youth was discussed. It was agreed that instead of sending a few of the most promising youth to the East for advanced training, it would be better to have a school in the settlement where many could be educated. A communication from Rev. John Garretson, Corresponding Secretary of the Home Missionary Society of the R. C. A., was read. It suggested a plan whereby an instructor could be sent from the East to give instruction, if place for a school could be established."

On October 14, 1851, Rev. A. C. Van Raalte announced to Classis that the prospects of an English Academy were getting more and more encouraging and that a prospective teacher for such a school had already been found, in the person of Mr. Walter T. Taylor, elder of the Reformed Church of Geneva, N. Y., a man of exceptional qualification and reputation. "Thereupon the brethren spoke about the importance and excellence of such a precious gift, if God should be pleased to grant in the midst of us, such an institution of education."

At a meeting on September 1, 1852, Rev. C. Van der Meulen, speaking of the institution for the education of the youth, that, by the benevolence of brethren in the eastern states, had now been established in Holland, said that "the purpose of the donors was to confer a benefit upon the Holland people in all the congregations.

Since, however, a lack of means on the part of the parents is an obstacle that prevents the children from making use of this precious gift," he suggested "that the congregations unitedly collect means for opening boarding houses for children sent from outside, in order that we no longer let the years go by without training our posterity to fill the various positions and important offices in church, school and civil government, because we, as overseers, fathers and leaders of the people, cannot any longer die with an easy conscience, if we do not take care that we leave behind us successors and pastors. Only thus can we discharge the responsibilities of civil government and exercise a Christian influence in this country, as we ought." Van der Meulen said further that he "was obliged to speak on account of his own children whose education was for him one of the most important needs and duties, but for which the means were lacking to him. He would "also speak for all the Elkanas and Hannahs who would gladly dedicate their Samuels to the Lord, if there were only a place where they could bring them. Yes, he "would speak in the interest of this entire people which cannot be built up, cannot enjoy real prosperity, without the training and education of their youth." He plead therefore "that an earnest call should go out to the people to join hands and unanimously put their shoulders to the wheel to accomplish this work."

Many lively speeches followed, in the course of which it was pointed out that "the institution was given to the Hollanders in view of their be-

ing a religious people, a people attached to the Reformed truth, not only to furnish an education, but above all to assure them such an education as would be under the supervision of the churches themselves, as a guarantee that they should see their children trained in the same religious principles." It was emphasized that "the performance of this primary duty is a burden not too heavy, since it requires from each but a small annual contribution in proportion as God has prospered him; for should not a man be able to dedicate to this end a thousand barrel staves, or a couple cords of bark; or a farmer give some ten bushels of corn or potatoes; or some butter or pork; or a day laborer give his wages for a couple days?"

Resulting from these discussions, was the beginning of the Classical Board of Benevolence, a plan for the support of needy students. A commission was appointed, consisting of the pastor and one or two elders from each church.

April 27, 1853, Rev. A. C. Van Raalte presented the village of Holland with ten lots upon which suitable buildings should be built for the Academy. A Mr. Schaik of New York contributed \$500.00 for erection of a building.

The Minutes of April 13, 1854, show that fifteen young men were enrolled as students. Thus the English or Holland Academy was a reality.

The incorporation was accomplished in 1856. Upon the resignation of Mr. Taylor, Rev. Cornelius Crispell and Mr. John Van Vleck were appointed as instructors and the number of stu-

dents grew to forty by April 8, 1857. Among the first graduates of the Holland Academy were the two sons of Rev. Cornelius Van der Meulen, Jacob and John, who were to get their further training for the ministry at New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Some years later, 1861, when financial embarrassment threatened to close the doors of Hope College, Cornelius Van der Meulen was asked by his brethren to visit the churches for aid. In a few months sufficient funds were raised by him to wipe out all indebtedness and leave a balance in the treasury. Thus Hope College was saved.

As a member of the Council of Hope College, the services of Van der Meulen were of great value. Dr. Philip Phelps, the first president of Hope College, bore this testimony: "No one, indeed, was more valued at the meetings of the Council than Father Van der Meulen, with his strong common sense, and his eminent theological attainments acquired by the reading of the Word and the teaching of the Spirit. And his name alone helped to inspire the Hollanders with confidence in the College. Van der Meulen said that the Hollanders wanted security for the permanence of the school on a theological basis, so that when he and others should pass away, it could not be changed. The legacy which he left for Hope College is in accordance with his desire. It is for the Ebenezer Endowment Fund. One of the principles of the Holland emigration was a Church School in which should be taught everything essential to prepare men for the Gospel

ministry and chief of all, theology. For such a school the Hollanders had toiled and prayed and given, and such a school they desired to have to the end of time."

"Hope College, located in the beautiful and thriving city of Holland, Michigan, is a Liberal Arts College with a faculty of 38 members. The beautiful campus is graced by a large and imposing Gothic structure, the Hope Memorial Chapel which has sixteen memorial windows and a grand four-manual Skinner organ. It is considered one of the most beautiful chapels in our country. Hope College is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges, by the University of Michigan and by the Association of American Universities."

Organization of Western Theological Seminary

Western Seminary began as a Theological Department of Hope College in 1866. In 1867, the Rev. Cornelius E. Crispell was elected to serve as Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology. Other professors helping the instruction in theology continued until 1877. Preparation of students for the ministry was resumed in 1884 and has continued ever since as a seminary separate from the College.

Western Seminary has six fully established departments. In 1939, it was incorporated under the Michigan State Law, and it also became a member of the American Association of Theological Schools and was given a high rating.

Western Theological Seminary paid a fitting tribute to both Van Raalte and Van der Meulen when it dedicated two of its chairs to the memory of these pioneers: "The A. C. Van Raalte Chair of Theology" and the "Cornelius Van der Meulen Chair of Old Testament Language and Literature."

Biographical Sketch of Cornelius Van der Meulen

Cornelius Van der Meulen was born on December 15, 1800, at Middelharnis, Netherlands. His mother died when he was little more than four years old, so that he never remembered a fond mother's care. His father was a man of good mind, acquainted with, and a defender of, Christian truth. The father's occupation kept him away from home long hours so that Cornelius was left largely to care for himself and was often found seeking diversion and warmth standing in the doorway of some shop. He began very early to work for a living, and spent his evenings in seeking to educate himself. He became proficient in Algebra, Geometry and Surveying. This knowledge was to be of great value when, as leader of the settlement in Zeeland, Michigan, he did the greater part of the surveying, and plotting of the village. Becoming a contractor for government buildings in Rotterdam, he was fitted too, for superintending the erection of buildings in the new settlement.

He was converted from the scepticism of a deist to the ardent faith of a Christian, together with his wife, (nee Elizabeth Gertrude Van de

Roovaard, whom he had married in 1827), when their two only children, a boy of four and one of two, died in one day from cholera which was the scourge that swept Europe in 1832. The grief-stricken parents moved from Rotterdam to Middelharnis and joined the little company of "seceders from the state church" in that place. Not long after, Van der Meulen was elected an elder, and having served as such with a devotion that resulted in the edification of saints and the conversion of sinners, he was unanimously called to be the pastor of that church. He hesitated long before reaching a decision. Contracting for public buildings had proven a prosperous business. Could the church offer him more than a precarious living? He was soon ready to trust the Lord on that score; but a more serious problem confronted him. He felt that he was not qualified for leadership in the church. He had neither college nor seminary training. After much thought and prayer, he decided to go to Utrecht and put himself under the tutelage of Rev. Henry P. Scholte, then pastor of the "seceders" in that city and a preacher of such eloquence that he was called "the Wonder of God." If this training of a year's duration seemed to have proven adequate and the church at Middelharnis still desired him, he would accept their call.

And thus it was that Cornelius Van der Meulen received ordination as a minister of the Gospel at the hands of Rev. H. P. Scholte, Nov. 24, 1839, which ordination was confirmed by the Synod of 1840 at Amsterdam.

Having served the combined churches of Rotterdam and Middelharnis, with great blessing, Van der Meulen received a call from the Province of Zeeland, to serve its twelve congregations, with residence at Goes. He began his labors in this new field June 13, 1841. He preached for these twelve congregations by rotation, led the consistory meetings, cateclused the children, and visited the homes. In three years' time, each congregation was able to build a church, and five of them to call a pastor of their own.

The following incident will illustrate the conscientiousness of Van der Meulen. He was to preach at Noordeloos. One of the members of that church was to meet him at Meerkerk, which was as far as the railroad would take him. But Van der Meulen was not on the train nor at the station. A little later the friend met him on the street and inquired why he had not come by train? The answer was: "I did not feel justified in asking the church to pay my fare, so I walked." A fifteen mile hike on a hot Saturday! What a preparation for two animated sermons next day!

After six years in Zeeland, The Netherlands, Van der Meulen set sail for America as pastor of a newly organized church that was seeking refuge from persecution in the fatherland. This group of emigrants established themselves in Michigan and called their settlement Zeeland. The church grew rapidly and soon enrolled 325 communicant members.

The city of Zeeland has grown to a population of 2,500. It is commercially and industrially prosperous. It is known nationally for its chicken hatcheries and manufacture of Grandfather or Hall clocks and other furniture.

It is a good city to live in. The people are law-abiding and have never tolerated a saloon in their midst.

It is a city of churches. First Reformed has 319 families, 690 communicants, and 653 Sunday School scholars. Contributions total \$11,000 for Benevolence, Congregational, \$14,658. Second Reformed has 218 families, with 483 communicants, Sunday School, 319. Contributions: Benevolence, \$6,000, Congregational, \$9,795.

After Van der Meulen had been in Zeeland some years, other churches began to seek his services. Calls came from Rochester, New York, once and again, also twice from Buffalo, New York, then from Grand Haven, Drenthe, and Second Grand Rapids. All these were declined. In 1859, a call came from Chicago. Immediately, he felt that this was indeed a call from God to cross the Lake and build a church in this great metropolis. The church had existed some eleven years, but was still struggling to maintain itself. Comparing itself with the large and prospering church in Zeeland, the little group in Chicago testified that they had ventured to call Van der Meulen with fear and trembling.

On the first Sunday after the minister's arrival, the congregation was so small that the newly installed pastor was so disappointed that he cried: "Are there no more Hollanders than

this in this great city of Chicago?" "Yes," was the answer, "in the Groniger Hoek (Gronigen Corner)." Here were people who had come from the province of Gronigen in The Netherlands, but they were, notoriously, so irreligious, that there was no thought of looking to them for support. Van der Meulen made contact with that neighborhood and found that the indifference and wickedness there had not been exaggerated.

But he formed his plan: "If the Gospel is not worth that much to these people that they will come to hear me preach, it is worth that much to me that I shall bring it to their homes." And so he did. Homes were visited, the Spirit of God worked mightily in their midst. People became interested, sin-conscious and desirous of being saved from their evil ways. The "Groniger Hoek" of which it could have been said "where the Synagogue of Satan is," became changed into "a Paradise of God." A new church was soon built and this was filled by an eager and happy congregation.

Thus pioneer work had been done in Chicago. With the growth of the city, churches multiplied. Today, the Classis of Chicago of the Reformed Church of America numbers eleven churches with a total number of families of 2,611 and communicant members totalling 5,594. The largest of these is the Bethany Reformed Church of Roseland with 765 families and 1,621 communicants.

After two years of soul-refreshing ministry in Chicago, Van der Meulen received and accepted a call to become pastor of the Second Re-

formed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, that is, in 1861, to do pioneer work there. The reader will remember that the First Reformed Church of Grand Rapids was already there, being one of the churches that came out of the Fairview, Illinois migration. These two churches in combination, effected in 1918, continue their existence as the "Central Reformed Church of Grand Rapids."

Elder T. Van Driele, one of the organizers of Second Church, gives an interesting account of the history of that church.

This Franz Van Driele will be remembered, by old residents of Grand Rapids, Michigan, as one of the proprietors with the Kotvis Brothers, a large feed store on Bostwick Avenue.

Translating as best we can from the Dutch, we learn that two or three families, together with a few young men and women, felt the need of meeting together on the Lord's Day for religious services in the Holland language. They did this, beginning in July of 1848. In the summer of 1849, Rev. C. Van der Meulen became acquainted with what was taking place in Grand Rapids, and always a friend of young people, he interested himself in this little group. Frequent visits were made, and sermons preached during the week and on Sundays. As the number grew, organization as a church was desired, and accomplished in 1849. From that time until 1854, Rev. C. Van der Meulen, though pastor of Zeeland, carried the burden of this young church. He made his trips between these two places with a team of Indian ponies.

In 1854, Rev. H. G. Klijn was called as pastor and served the church until 1857. The church was torn in two by the secession of 1857. Again Van der Meulen came to the rescue and acted as advisor to the remaining remnant, until Rev. W. H. Houbolt became their pastor in 1859. After serving as such for one year, Rev. W. Houbolt accepted a call to Albany, N. Y.

Rev. C. Van der Meulen was called to the pastorate of Second Grand Rapids. Four years earlier, Van der Meulen had been called but had declined the call, going to Chicago instead. This time the church succeeded in securing Rev. C. Van der Meulen as their pastor. He had not been able to deny their entreaties. They said that "their condition was so hopeless that unless God Almighty had mercy upon them, they must be overwhelmed and perish in utter despair. Oh, beloved brother, there is more than a world at stake. Here the body of Christ has been rent asunder. There is need of healing. It is impossible to describe the need here. God only knows how much we need help; we beg Him therefore to incline your heart to come over and help us!"

On the first Sunday of May, 1861, Rev. C. Van der Meulen began his work at Second Grand Rapids.

Van Driele wrote later, "Within two or three weeks the breach was healed and the church began to prosper again. Many people who had come from The Netherlands, indifferent and godless, were converted. God's people were edified, instructed and established. January, 1870, witnessed a great revival. It was the time of the

annual week of prayer. Three times on the Sunday preceding, three times on the Sunday following, and on every night of the intervening week, Van der Meulen preached, thus twelve sermons in eight days. Twenty people made confession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. One of these was a mother of between sixty and seventy years of age, together with her daughter of twenty-eight years. The church was always more than filled. It was a blessed time."

Rev. C. Van der Meulen retired in 1873. The church had grown to 376 families with 481 communicant members, besides being the mother of two other churches.

Grand Rapids, Michigan, has grown to be a city of 175,000 population, a great commercial and industrial center.

The churches in the city of Grand Rapids of the Classis of Grand Rapids of the R. C. A., number 22, with a total of 4,235 families and 8,610 communicant members. The largest church is Central Reformed with 585 families, 1,102 communicant members.

The reader must bear in mind that the statistics given above are those of the Reformed Church in America. The figures could be increased by several thousands if one could but know how many Hollanders have their membership in other evangelical denominations and especially in the Christian Reformed Church.

Cornelius Van der Meulen died August 23, 1876, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. On Saturday, August 26, 1876, a short funeral service was held

in the Second Reformed Church at 8:30 a. m. and was attended by a large gathering of friends who, in spite of the early hour, came to pay their last respects to their beloved pastor. Rev. N. H. Dosker preached the sermon on the text: John 11:11, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." The remains were taken to Zeeland for burial, by train, accompanied by the family, consistory of the church and friends, who filled the two special coaches that had been reserved for them. At Zeeland the consistory of the First Reformed Church took charge, acting as active and honorary pall bearers. Ministers taking part in the service were Christian Van der Veen, William Moerdyk, A. Kuiper, W. P. De Jong, Adrian Zwemer, H. Uiterwyk, James De Pree, D. Broek, C. Oggel, and Prof. Chas. Scott, President of Hope College.

Rev. A. Kuiper had been an elder in the church at Rotterdam during Van der Meulen's pastorate there. Rev. W. P. De Jong and A. Zwemer and H. Uiterwyk had been catchumens and converts, and the latter in his tribute coined the title, "Van der Meulen, the Apostle of Zeeland."

Everywhere Cornelius Van der Meulen was regarded as a preacher of power. His preaching was clear, personal, persuasive, evangelical and Scriptural. Exposition of the Word was his delight. His was a fruitful ministry. He thanked God that he had been instrumental in bringing no less than two thousand souls to the confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

As a man and pastor, he had a remarkable understanding and sympathy for those who were in trouble of any kind. His was an affectionate nature that made him the friend of both old and young, the beloved "Father Van der Meulen."

Cornelius Van der Meulen possessed a tactfulness that made discord and enmity quite impossible. On one occasion, a man who had done him a wrong, came to ask forgiveness. He was quickly interrupted: "Tut! Tut! forget it. I don't keep a memory book!"

At a congregational meeting a difference of opinion became manifest and a warm discussion developed. Angry voices began to shout disapproval. At this juncture, Ds. Van der Meulen asked for silence and suggested: "Let's flip a coin!" Heads and tails were chosen; the coin was tossed, and everybody was satisfied. The seemingly impossible had been accomplished.

One is quite amused in reading the minutes of the Classis of Holland, to find that when all manner of dissensions, family quarrels, etc., were discussed, it was almost invariably the case that Cornelius Van der Meulen was appointed to visit the offenders and heal the breaches.

Long live the memory of our worthy pioneers! And God make us worthy successors!

How can we prove ourselves worthy successors of the God-fearing pioneers who builded better than they knew in laying the foundations of these Holland settlements in America? Surely it can be only through our cherishing and using the blessings secured for us by their sacrifice, namely, Freedom of Worship and Christian Education.

That the people generally were as fervently religious as their leaders were, is evidenced throughout the Holland settlements. In a letter dated October 8, 1847, Rev. Cornelius Van der Meulen wrote: "I think that there are nearly two thousand people living in our colony and one would have to search to find one house in which there was not one or more who feared God. Yes, prayers are heard ascending from every cabin to God whose guiding hand they recognized in every experience of joy and sorrow." Could as much be said today of our homes? Is the family altar in evidence everywhere among us?



Appendix

Having completed my assigned task and having realized a long standing ambition, I am now haunted by the fear that some of my readers may think that I have not given sufficient honor to another great leader of the 1847 emigration, viz., Rev. H. P. Scholte, nor adequate recognition of the City of Pella, or Central College, or the Particular Synod of Iowa. Very true, I have not; but neither have I done much better with reference to Dr. A. C. Van Raalte, the City of Holland, or the Synod of Chicago. Be it understood then, that I have confined myself to the one sphere, in the assurance that others will give adequate treatment to these other spheres, and in hope that our **combined effort** will give deserved honor to every group of **Hollanders** whose coming to America is to be commemorated in the 100th Anniversary of the Emigration of 1847.

However, it may not be inappropriate, in order to show that the leaders, and every group of **Hollanders**, and descendants of **Hollanders**, have had the will to achieve and develop the two objectives, viz., Freedom of Worship and Christian Education—that a short biographical sketch of Rev. H. P. Scholte and a brief history of the educational institutions of the Western Section of the R. C. A. be added here.

Rev. Henry Peter Scholte and Pella, Iowa

Among the earliest dissenters from the state “**Hervormde Kerk**” in The Netherlands following the reorganization of the Reformed Church

in The Netherlands, was a group of students who had been associates in school in Amsterdam and who met again in the University of Leiden. This group included Albertus C. Van Raalte, Anthony Brummelkamp, Henry Peter Scholte and others. They were pleased to be known as the "Scholte Club." This designation must be regarded as a tribute to the personality and influence of Henry Peter Scholte.

"Upon completion of his university course, Scholte became pastor of the church at Doeveren. Here his eloquent preaching led to his being called "a wonder of God" and drew large crowds to his small church." Miss Pieters writes: "Scholte was suspended from his clerical duties in the State Church when charged among other things, with being one of those disturbers in the church who insisted on returning to the doctrines of the Synod of Dort. It was in answer to this that Scholte and his congregation signed an Act of Secession dated November 1, 1834, in which they declared that as a Reformed Church they had seceded from the Re-organized Church. With no churches to meet in, the dissenters held services in private homes, barns, or the open air. Gatherings of more than nineteen persons were forbidden and disobedience of this order was punished with fines or imprisonment. Once Rev. H. P. Scholte was kept in prison for three weeks. On another occasion, he was preaching from a farmer's cart when the dragoons came and ordered the congregation to disperse. The order was disobeyed, whereupon the soldiers cut the cart to splinters, the brave preacher and his wife going down in the wreck."

“As persecution increased in violence, Scholte and his followers decided to emigrate to America. The first meeting was held at Leerdam, in July of 1846, to discuss emigration. The following December, at a meeting held at Utrecht, a formal organization was effected with Rev. H. P. Scholte as President. Infidels and Catholics were forbidden membership. Nearly all of this group of emigrants came from well-to-do agricultural classes who owned and tilled their own farms. Late in April, 1847, they set sail for America. They went in four ships, three sailing from Rotterdam and one from Amsterdam, all “three-masters.” The first of these arrived in Baltimore in twenty-six days, and the last after two months.

“Religious services were held on shipboard daily. The ships were dirty when the Hollanders went aboard, but long before they reached Baltimore, they were as clean as proverbial Dutch kitchens. The health officers at Baltimore were so impressed with the cleanliness of the ships that the immigrants were allowed to land without the usual inspections.

“The journey inland was long and tedious; railroad cars were small, hardly accommodating eight persons comfortably and these were jerked and jolted over rough roads. The immigrants had never seen so many mountains. They longed for the prairies which they had been told lay to the west. At Columbia, Pennsylvania, they were packed into dirty canal boats. After fourteen days they arrived at Pittsburgh; then on to St. Louis. Newspapers published widely that these Hollanders were possessors of great

wealth. In consequence of these rumors, the people with whom they had to do business, charged them far more than Irish or German immigrants for the same services.

“Becoming acquainted with a Baptist missionary, Rev. M. J. Post, Scholte and his party were led by him to what he called the finest tract of land in Iowa.

“The coming of these immigrants must have furnished a strange spectacle for the natives. There were more than seven hundred colonists in strange garb and speaking a strange language. Some rode in wagons drawn by horses, some in carts drawn by oxen, and some walked and wearing wooden shoes. An amusing incident is related. One of the immigrants had bought a team of horses for \$250. When the wagon had been loaded with the family’s household goods, the horses refused to move, however much the new owner talked to them about the necessity of doing so. The Hollander was sure that he had been swindled. An amused native came to the rescue. He said that the team was all right but that they did not understand Dutch. Addressed by the stranger in the vernacular of Iowa, the horses started almost at a run, and now, the Hollander wondered whether they would understand enough Dutch to stop when he wanted them to!

“After several days’ journey, on August 26, 1847, the colonists came to a place where the scouts, who had preceded them, had planted a hickory pole with a shingle nailed to the top, and on this was the word ‘Pella’.” “But dominie,

where is Pella?" asked Mrs. Scholte, before alighting. "We are in the center of it, my dear," was the reply.

"Iowa, as they saw it, in 1847—no pen can describe it! It was billowy like the sea, which they had crossed. There was wave after wave of grass, everywhere breaking into spray of wild flowers. So beautiful was their new home that they soon forgot the cultivated fields by the dykes and ditches over the sea and the windmills that stood over them.

"Prof. Newhall, a traveling writer of that time, wrote: "These Hollanders are all Protestants who have left their native land (much like the Puritans of old) on account of political and religious intolerance and persecution. They appear to be intelligent and respectable, quite above the average class of European immigrants that have ever come to our shores."

"The first house built in Pella, by the Hollanders was a long wooden building of boards upright. The first winter most of the people lived in dugouts with roofs covered with straw. This led to the nickname "Straw Town." There was love, unity, and helpfulness. Evenings were spent in psalm singing and edifying conversation.

"Nothing was allowed to take precedence of religion and education. Persecuted on account of religion, being dissenters from the state Reorganized Church, they called their new home 'Pella,' the name signifying 'refuge.'" Upon the seal of the new town, they inscribed the Latin

motto, translated as "In God our Hope and Refuge." Such is the early history of Pella, Iowa, mother church of the Particular Synod of Iowa of the R. C. A. as given by Cyremus Cole in "Souvenir History of Pella, Iowa, 1847-1922."

History of Central College

Quoting from Corwin's Manual of the R. C. A. "Central College, located at Pella, Iowa, is a providential gift to the Reformed Church in America." The circumstances of its origin so far as the R. C. A. is concerned are clearly stated in the resolution of its Board of Trustees adopted November 30, 1915. It was then resolved, "That all grounds, buildings and equipment now owned by said Central College University of Iowa, together with said name of said institution, be transferred to the Reformed Church in America . . . without material monetary consideration, upon condition that the said Reformed Church in America . . . take said grounds, buildings and equipment and build up and maintain at Pella, Iowa, an accredited Christian College under the laws of the state of Iowa."

The reasons for this unusual action were two-fold—first a desire of the Board of Education of the Northern Baptist Convention to consolidate their educational interests in the state. Secondly, the constituency of the Reformed Church, being large in the community, is apt to increase if the control of the college be placed in the hands of the Reformed Church.

General Synod in June, 1916, adopted the two following resolutions. 1. That General Synod accept Central University of Iowa as tendered by its Board of Trustees, as reconstituted by its action taken June 6, 1916, as the agency of the Reformed Church in America for the government and control of the said College during the ensuing year. 2. That as a precedent to Central College being fully established as a College of the Reformed Church, the project of securing at least \$150,000 additional endowment is deemed essential to the permanent efficiency of the College, and the Board of Trustees is hereby encouraged to complete the work so happily begun. Thus Central College officially became a Reformed Church institution.

Previously, "Central College was a Baptist institution. It was authorized in 1853 . . . There was at the time of transfer a faculty of 21 members, 13 men and 8 women. The equipment consisted of a campus of eight acres, right in the heart of the town of Pella, on which stood five buildings valued at about \$10,000."

"Since 1916, Central has added much to its physical equipment. In the last ten years the endowment and current income have been more than doubled, the campus has been enlarged and beautified so that today it is one of the finest college campuses. The faculty numbers twenty-four. It is fully accredited and its students are accepted for post graduate work in the universities of the country."

Other educational institutions of the Reformed Church in America are:

1. "The Northwestern Classical Academy and Junior College, located at Orange City, Iowa and founded in 1882. The territory surrounding has been reported in the Agricultural report of the United States Commission as the garden of America. It is also in the midst of one of the most flourishing sections of the Reformed Church.

Its curriculum prepares students for full collegiate work in classical, scientific and literary courses. Its students are admitted into the leading colleges without examination.

In 1893 it was placed on the list of Iowa Colleges by the State Board of examiners.

It has a campus of ten acres and well equipped buildings. The Junior College Department is fully accredited for two years of college work and is a member of the American Association of Junior Colleges."

2. "Pleasant Prairie Academy, located at German Valley, Illinois, about 100 miles west of Chicago, in one of the prosperous rural communities of that state. It is also in the heart of an ever growing constituency of the German branch of the Reformed Church in America. It was opened for work in September, 1894.

The purpose of the institution is to prepare men for the ministry in the German speaking churches, because the existing institutions of the church failed to supply the need.

It has Classical, Scientific and Literary courses in the English language, which are up to the standard requirements of Hope and Central Colleges. It also has a normal course for teachers and an elementary business course.

A goodly number of its graduates have entered the ministry of the Reformed Church."

'After a Hundred Years

In answer to the possible question: "What has been the growth of the R. C. A. in the west during the past one hundred years?" let me give the statistics of 1945.

The number of churches in the Synod of Chicago is 153, in the Synod of Iowa, 137, or 290 for these two Western Synods as compared with 452 in the older Synods of Albany, New Brunswick and New York. The number of families in the Synod of Chicago is 22,336, of Iowa, 11,079, a total of 33,415; as compared with 137,121 in the three other Synods; number of communicants; In Chicago Synod, 46,974; In Iowa, 23,197, a total of 70,171; in other Synods: 103,804; adherents: Chicago, 2,553, Iowa, 2,711, total, 5,264; other Synods, 17,700.

If the statistics of the Christian Reformed Church which for the greatest part is Holland in its membership and located very largely in the West, were included, and if one could know how many Hollanders have become identified with other communions, it would be seen that the Hollanders must have exerted a very great influence upon the religious life of America.

God help us to appreciate the sacrifices by which our pioneers secured for us the Objectives: Freedom of Worship and Christian Education. And God help us to preserve and increase our holy heritage!

Jacob Van der Meulen.





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